

***And Both Were Young***

By Madeleine L'Engle

Philippa Hunter (Flip) is sent to a strict boarding school in Switzerland after World War II. Her father is an artist, her mother died in an accident less than a year ago, and a woman is "lusting after her father" in Flip's words. Flip believes this woman does not like her and blames her for being sent away. Flip is miserable, feels clumsy and left out, doesn't make friends easily and feels all the other girls are laughing at her. Her first weeks at school are terrible so she starts slipping away to talk to Paul, who she met on the train coming to school. She learns that the best teacher at school is his aunt and they both agree to help her learn to ski after the physical education teacher told her she would be unable to learn. As Flip grows in confidence, her artistic abilities bring her closer to the other girls, and she helps Paul overcome a horror from the war. This book is recommended for grades 6-8 and for any library collection. This book was originally published in 1949 in a slightly different form. The setting is shortly after WWII. While the story started very slowly, it seemed to develop even more slowly. I was at least 70-80 pages into the book (total pages are 238) and was ready to write it off as don't recommend. The author seemed to take an extraordinary amount of time telling the reader how Phil arrived at the school and especially how unhappy she was. When the plot finally started moving, it was interesting and piqued my interest. However, this would probably appeal to only girls, and some will not be patient enough to continue this book. If they do, I believe they will like it. This might be relevant to girls who feel out of place at school, lack friends, or are having a hard time adjusting.

Deb Daehnke

***The Case of the Deadly Desperados***

By Caroline Lawrence

P.K. Pinkerton was born to a white father and Indian mother and was eventually adopted by Ma and Pa Jones. P.K. comes home one day to find Whittlin Walt and cohorts have murdered his parents. He escapes to Virginia City with them hot on his tail because he has a letter they want, and think is worth a lot of money, if it is truly a deed for property in Virginia City. P.K. eludes Walt and meets a variety of colorful characters along the way, eventually determining his fate with the validity of the letter. This book had references to hurdy gurdy girls, soiled doves, brothels, a scalping, lawlessness and a host of unsavory characters in Virginia City. I couldn't quite decide if the book was supposed to be a drama, a comedy, a combination or what, although the book jacket deemed it a mystery adventure. Every time I sat down to read this book it made me feel jumpy. I love books set in the old West but couldn't get into this one. I would not recommend this book. I feel there are better books available to purchase.

Deb Daehnke

***The Secret Cave, Discovering Lascaux***

By Arnold Emily McCully

The book starts out in a classroom of the teacher Monsieur Leon Laval. This man collected prehistoric bones and stone tools where he lived in France. In 1940, three young men in the class were very excited when their teacher took them to a cave to explore. The cave was special because it was full of prehistoric drawings. One day, they were out and one of the boys' dog fell in a deep hole that became a tunnel. They thought it was the "Count's Tunnel" and would lead to hidden treasure. The boys thought it was wonderful and decided not to tell anyone what they had found. Finally they told their teacher what they had found and he didn't believe them. Laval told the boys that there was an expert on prehistoric art staying nearby and he would like to show him the art work on the walls. The boys enlarged openings and added ladders for the man. The boys slept in front of the cave to protect it from harm. Hundreds of people came to see the boys' find. After the war ended, Jojo, Marcel, and Jacques were put in charge of the Lascaux cave. What a great story. Recommended for grades 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> and appropriate for any library.

Carol Tramp

***Fireboy to the Rescue; a Fire Safety Book***

By Edward Miller

There are very bright colors in this book. Fireboy, the main character, shows and tells about all the things one should do to keep themselves safe. Everything from stop, drop, and roll, to what to do if the hallway is on fire in an apartment house. Nice addition for any library shelf and recommended for grades 3<sup>rd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup>.

Carol Tramp

***When Grandmama Sings***

By Margaree King Mitchell

This is a wonderful book. It catches the spirit of what it was like for African Americans before the Civil Rights Movement in the South. Life was hard and they didn't have the rights they deserved. Written from the perspective of a young girl, she describes her grandmother trying to become a singing performer. She travels with her grandmother on her first tour and describes all the things they have to endure to do this. I really enjoyed this book and the pictures were great. Recommended for grades 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> and appropriate for any library.

Carol Tramp

***Little Bear and the Marco Polo***

By Else Homelund Minarik

This is the very first "*I Can Read*" book. Two hundred books follow in its wake. Written over fifty years ago, it is still timely today. Grandpa Bear and Little Bear share little scenarios that are really cute. An enjoyable book. Recommended for grades 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> and appropriate for any library.

Carol Tramp

### ***The Scrawny Little Tree; A Christmas Story***

By Ed Mehler

Imagine a tree lot where beautiful green trees stand in rows; lush, full, and wonderful. Then imagine one small, scraggly, tiny tree that was so ugly the tree lot owner hid it behind all the other trees. In that town lived one small boy that had hardly enough money to buy food. No one in the town seemed to worry whether he would have a happy Christmas with a tree and presents or even good food to eat. The little boy had saved pennies because this year he wanted a tree. The owner laughed with glee when he chose the scraggly tree. The little tree loved the little boy and wanted to do something back for the boy. The next morning when the boy got up there was the most magnificent tree that anyone had ever seen. People came from far and near to see this beautiful tree and they felt that the tree should be preserved, and to this day the tree is a sight to behold in the town. They also realized that no one should live in such misery and took steps to make his life, and the lives of others, better. Recommended for grades 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> and appropriate for any library.

Carol Tramp

### ***All You Desire***

By Kirsten Miller

Haven and Iain moved to Rome a year ago to get away from Adam Rosier and Ouroboros Society after faking his death. Now her best friend Beau Decker is missing and Haven and Iain are forced to return to New York to try to find him. Soon the Horae are involved. They have been trying to capture Adam for centuries and they are sure that with Haven's help they feel they can finally lock him and his evil away for good. The problem is that the better Haven gets to know both Adam and the Horae, she is no longer sure whom she can trust. The truth becomes twisted within the lies and Haven must find a way to know where the truth lies so that she can make the best decision for all those involved. Here is the sequel to "The Eternal Ones" where the drama continues. If you enjoyed the first book you will also enjoy this one and will look forward to the continuation of the saga. Recommended for grades 9<sup>th</sup> and up and appropriate for any library.

Diane Limoges

***Nugget on the Flight Deck***

By Patricia Newman

This nonfiction book talks through what it would be like to ride a carrier and all the terms and jargon that would go with this adventure. A Nugget is a first time rider on the carrier or Mother. The little boy eats chow, sees where his bed is in a rack, and tells time in military time. A little advanced for a smaller child, but for someone who loves boats or ships and is military minded, I am sure that they would eat it up. Recommended for grades 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> and appropriate for any library.

Carol Tramp

***Pirate Boy***

By Eve Bunting

This is a sweet story of a mama and her son and the lengths she will go to find him...all in good make believe fun.

Preschoolers and Kindergarteners will adore this story with its pirate adventure and mama love. Illustrations are adorable as well and will help early readers with context. This book is highly recommended for any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

***That Pup!***

By Lindsay Barrett George

This is a simple story of a dog that loves to dig...and happens to be finding acorns everywhere. He's so happy, until he realizes that he's undoing a little squirrel's winter stash. And so they quickly reverse the game together. Preschoolers and Kindergarteners will enjoy this fun fall frolic. The illustrations pretty much tell the story...down to the expressions on the animals' faces. This book is highly recommended for any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

***My Little Train***

By Satomi Ichikawa

This is make believe story of a little train that gives all his playroom friends rides all over the room pretending to leave them in pastures (Monet paintings), jungles (a potted plant), the top of a mountain (a couch), and more. This is a good story that celebrates imagination and preschoolers will readily identify with this scenario. It's a little like Toy Story and Raggedy Ann. This book is highly recommended for any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

***Squish Rabbit***

By Katherine Battersby

This is the sweet story of a little bunny who is feeling insignificant until he finally meets just the right friend. It's amazing what a good buddy can do! The simple illustrations are adorable and it's quite amazing what a little bit of text and little sketches can convey. This book is highly recommended for any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

***Princess Posey and the Next Door Dog***

By Stephanie Greene

This is the third book in the Princess Posey series which are very easy chapter books that are highly interesting to little girls who are beginning to read. Princesses and puppies ...it doesn't get better. In this story, Posey is a little afraid of the dog until she puts on her Princess Posey tutu and finds the courage. Cute story and illustrations also make this a great pick for early elementary students. This book is recommended for any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

***Fish Had a Wish***

By Michael Garland

A fish has a wish to be something different – then finds out he decides to wish to be himself! This book has great, colorful illustrations and super, enlarged details. It is an entertaining book for the younger children. Shared it with the Pre-school and Kindergarten classes and they thoroughly enjoyed it. Recommended for grades Pre-school through Kindergarten and appropriate for any library.

Kristy Wittler

***Pinch Hit***

By Tim Green

This story is about two boys whose dreams could come true – if they could only trade places. This is just another excellent book by author, Tim Green. Two strangers accidentally meet and discover they each want the other's life for just a little while. Even though it is a sports book, girls would enjoy this book, too. It has a good plot line and keeps the reader involved. Recommended for grades 5<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> and appropriate for any library.

Kristy Wittler

***My Life in Black and White***

By Natasha Friend

Lexi has always been told "how pretty she is". She believes it is the only thing she has going for her as she grows up. Now, after a bad car accident, her face is badly damaged. What does she do now? She has lost the one thing that defined her. This is a typical "chick lit" book for teenagers. A very good story line but as an "old lady" I wonder why they have to have so much profanity in the story? Recommended for grades 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> and appropriate for any library.

Krisy Wittler

***Forget-Her-Notes***

By Amy Breccourt White

This is a magical story about Laurel, who has the gift of flowerspeak (the language of flowers). Also, she has a paranormal ability to use the magic in flowers to help others. Laurel is age fourteen. Not a great story-slightly predictable- however, it was unique in its integration of magic which is popular right now. Recommended for grades 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> and appropriate for any library.

Jennie Schneider

***The Underdogs***

By Mike Lupica

Will, a twelve year-old football player in love with the game, writes to the CEO of New Balance to ask them to sponsor their sports program which is in danger of being cut. Even with the sponsor-ship, Will has to overcome other obstacles to ensure he can play the game he loves. This book reminded me a little of "The Sandlot" movie and has interesting characters. This would be great for reluctant male readers. Recommended for the middle school grades, 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>, and appropriate for any library.

Jennie Schneider

***Witch Worries of Abbie Adams***

By Rhonda Hayter

Abbie comes from a long line of witches. She has a hard time not telling her best friend Callie. Her little brother compounds the problem by casting spells without thinking about the consequences. When her dad brings home a kitten, Abbie soon learns that for some reason a 13 year-old Thomas Edison has been sent into the future as said kitten. Now Abbie, with the help of her parents, must find a way to send Thomas Edison back where he belongs and not let Callie know what is going on. The subject bounces around a lot with too many subjects for the target reader to fully understand. This is an ok book that would be a good pick for an advanced 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> grade reader. No respectable 6<sup>th</sup> grader would be caught reading such an infantile book. Recommended for grades 3<sup>rd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> and appropriate for any library.

Diane Limoges

***Wendel's Workshop***

By Chris Riddell

Wendel liked to invent things but his workshop became such a mess that he invented a robot to clean it up. When things didn't go well, he invented another robot and another until the situation is remedied. This book contains cute pictures, written in cartoon style, and there are great illustrations on each page. Children will love this book! Recommended for all elementary grades and appropriate for any library.

Sharon Kinnan

***Madeline at the White House***

By John Bemelmans Marciano

The only thing missing is with this Madeline. There should be a calamity, and it's missing. Madeline should have taken a wrong turn and ended up in the briefing room. She should have lent great advice that could have changed the course of history. The girls could have toured the monuments and memorials. The little girl that was lonely could have planned her visit to Paris. There is a sad little girl living at the White House. Madeline and the girls came to visit and to share in the Easter activities in the White House. So children reading this book will know some of the White House lawn traditions for the holiday, but Miss Clavell and the girls left before they saw anything else. Again, there could have been so much more. Madeline's magician...not sure where he came from...sent along a magic stuffed bunny. He transported Madeline and the other little girl to Paris in their dreams but when morning came, Madeline had to go and the little girl had to stay at the White House. We never get to know if her life was better after that or if it returned to the dreary pre-visit existence. This book is appropriate for School or Community Library. It is a delight to look at and is portrayed in the correct color and artistry. Small children will enjoy the colorful pictures and details.

LeNell Quinn, Winside Public School

***Exile***

By Anne Osterlund

Aurelia has survived an attempted assassination by her half-sister and her father's rejection after she refuses to marry the man he has chosen. Exiled from the palace she travels the kingdom with Robert as her guide to learn more about the people and their lives. She loves Robert as he does her, but each is afraid to show their feelings. The only way they can have a life together is if she renounces her right to the crown. Along their travels they encounter attempts on her life as well as having to deal with the struggles of the frontier and desert. "Exile" is the sequel to "Aurelia" and looks to be part of a trilogy. The story bounces along with no real substance. Here is a romance novel with no real romance. If you are into mindless books with a lot of fluff and little else then this is the book for you. Recommended for grades 7<sup>th</sup> and up and appropriate for any library.

Diane Limoges

### ***A Diamond in the Desert***

By Kathryn Fitzmaurice

Tetsuo, his sister Kimi, and his mother are separated from his father and sent to Gila River Relocation Center because of their Japanese ancestry. This book is from the perspective of Tetsuo and his sister. How they feel about the small things like privacy when you need to go to the bathroom. How it feels to leave behind your dog, a real member of the family. What it's like to have your father sent to ND to be interrogated to make sure he's not a Japanese loyalist. Tetsuo loves baseball! Together, with Coach Takechi and some other boys, they build a baseball diamond and begin to play. As in all good stories, a calamity happens and Tetsuo briefly loses his will to play. His sister becomes lost in the desert because he is too busy to be a proper babysitter. In the end, however, Tetsuo rejoins his team and together they beat the Arizona State Champs. I think books like this are inspirational for our youth. We sometimes get caught up in the trivia of life, and so do our children. We can become inspired by people who have lived through terrible circumstances, and find the sunshine in the lining of the clouds. Tetsuo's new friend Horse doesn't speak. We learn, near the end of the story, that he hasn't spoken since his parents were killed in the bombing of Pearl Harbor. And yet, Horse is the one that makes the connection with Kimi. Kimi knows what Horse "says" because she takes time to be his friend. This book is about relocating your dreams when you can't follow them. This story is about people who care about and for each other. This book is making do with what you have, sticking together as a family, and hoping for better things to come. The cover illustration gives you a feeling for the time and place. It also gives you a feeling that there is sun breaking through the clouds – hope for the future, even though they're living in tough times. This book would appeal to baseball lovers, old and young, and history buffs that enjoy real-life WWII stories. It is appropriate for school or community libraries. The book is written in short sections, some only a paragraph long. But that seems to fit well because when you are a young Japanese boy, stuck in a relocation center, you just can't process all that is happening to you. Sometimes the author felt she needed to explain how Tetsuo felt, but sometimes just the details are given...and that's enough.

LeNell Quinn, Winside Public School

### ***I'm Adopted***

By Shelley Rotner

A very simple, down to the basics approach to give insight into the world of adoption. Many colorful photographs help to explain why children may have been given up for adoption, why parents choose to adopt, and the joy of adding a new member to the family. No big storyline, but good pictures and it is a good book to get young children talking about what they are thinking/feeling about adoption. Recommended for grades Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> and for any library.

Jane Dodson



***Plain Kate***

By Erin Bow

Plain Kate is the main character of the book but her talking cat, Taggle, steals the show. The book begins by describing why Kate is so different than the ordinary child in her town. She has a wonderful relationship with her father. He is a master wood carver and he teaches Kate to carve too. A fever spreads through the town and her father passes away. Kate is left all alone and lives in the drawers of her father's selling stall in the market. She carves charms to make a meager living. Good luck charms aren't as popular as scary charms that ward away evil spirits. One day a fiddler named Linnay comes to town. He is a witch and convinces Kate to give up her shadow and in return grants Kate the gift of Taggle being able to talk-he can truly be her companion and friend. Kate is forced to leave her town. She travels and meets up with gypsies. The story weaves on and on. Linnay re-enters Kate's life and manipulates everyone around her. Eventually she is forced to travel with him and give her blood daily to control a spirit. In the end, all turns out well, but at a great cost to many people. I don't think this book describes the time and place well enough that young readers can understand it. I do not think young readers will understand Eastern Europe and gypsy traditions. I also believe that the book is out of balance. It spends too much time on the torture of Kate and the evil that stretches wherever Linnay and the spirit travel. The resolution is not expanded enough. A middle school student would not be able to string together the events, recognize the repentance of Linnay before his death, and not understand that the mother could not stay with her daughter because she needed to finish her path to the afterlife. There are some good themes in this story, and one of them is that young people can accomplish so much. Keep trying and you will prevail. People of different cultures can learn to understand one another and live together as family. But, I do question why so much influence was placed on the physical and emotional pain of a young girl. Truthfully, I would not recommend this book because it is too dark and not well-written. Not my favorite choice for young readers.

***Just Behave Pablo Picasso!***

By Jonah Winter

This is the story of Picasso's early career. Many of his paintings are part of this book. This would be an interesting way to present a partial biography of Picasso. Recommended for middle elementary to junior high grades and appropriate for any library or children's collection. Sharon Kinnan

***Basketball Belles***

By Sue Macy

This is a story of a cowgirl who goes to college to be a "lady" and ends up playing girls' basketball at its beginning. This book is based on a true story and would be a good purchase for any library. Recommended for middle elementary on up. Sharon Kinnan

### ***Thresholds***

By Nina Kiriki Hoffman

Are we really alone? I mean, are we the only intelligent beings in the whole universe? Many people don't really give this concept a thought. Maya certainly didn't – until she had to. Maya's family just moved away from Idaho. Dad had the opportunity to start a new job in Oregon, so he and Mom decided to move the family. They felt Maya needed a change. Her best friend had recently lost her battle with cancer and Maya was having a hard time dealing with the loss. Everything reminded her of Stephanie and brought her to tears. The new family home turned out to be quite the change for Maya. The first thing she noticed was a little odd fairy that flew into her bedroom and slept by her side. Unbeknownst to Maya, the fairy left a scent on her that attracted some different sort of folks – her neighbors that, she later learns, do magic to control portals to other worlds. It attracts the crazy, sick guy who eventually places the alien egg he stole into Maya's arm so it can regain its health and hatch. She was thrown into a world of aliens and magic. Thank goodness for her neighbors, the Janus'. They chose to take Maya under their wing and help her through her predicament. The thing is that she has to keep all this a secret from her family because they just wouldn't understand. This story is attention grabbing, interesting, and has great mystery and adventure. I was disappointed in the ending, for it is very anticlimactic, considering all the events that led up to it. I would recommend this story for middle school aged students and is appropriate for any library.

Jane Dodson

### ***Ghost Dog Secrets***

By Peg Kehret

Rusty is a sixth grade middle school student. One day on the way to school, he sees a German shepherd chained to a tree outside in the elements. He begins watching the dog and realizes he is not being fed or watered either. To Rusty's surprise, a ghost dog appears that seems to want to help the shepherd. Rusty contacts animal control but nothing can be done without more proof. Rusty begins feeding and watering the dog and documenting the situation, but when he realizes the dog has been injured, he and his friend Andrew take matters into their own hands to rescue the shepherd, hide him and care for him. But did the boys rescue him or steal him? This question comes up as more events unravel. Rusty's mom does not know about the dog, his class is conducting a fund raising event for the local Humane Society, and the owner wants his dog back although he now has a new puppy chained outside his house. As the plot unfurls, Rusty discovers something more sinister at the dog owner's house. And what does the ghost dog have to do with the dog's owner? This book is recommended for grades 4-6 and any library collection. Web addresses are given for the ASPCA (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), information about puppy mills, and ghosts. There are instructions for knitting a cat blanket that can be donated

to shelters. The author raises the ethical dilemma of the boys 'rescuing' the dog versus 'stealing' the dog. The boys also take matters into their own hands and the author emphasizes how it would have been better if the boys had sought advice and help from their parents. The book brings to light signs of animal abuse and the best way to handle it. It also relates the discovery of a methamphetamine lab in the house. It's nice to see a young person's character who wants to do "right" and the adults who try to guide them in the ethical direction. A little bit of magic is injected into this story with the ghost dog. This is an easy to read book with a good message that I think students will enjoy. And with the relevance of animal abuse a very timely topic. Rusty is a compassionate and respectful character.

Deb Daehnke

***The Lost Conspiracy***

By Frances Hardinge

This story is a fantasy of the Lost and the Lace who live among the volcanoes. There is corruption and battles take place all over the island. The young woman thought to be the Lace princess is actually the last surviving Lost. This book has a very complicated story-line with many characters to follow. I would not consider this a good purchase.

Recommended for junior high to high school grades and appropriate for any library.

Sharon Kinnan

***Kindred Souls***

By Patricia MacLachlan

Jake is a ten-year-old farm boy who shares a very special bond with his Grandfather, Billie. During the summer, they share walks every day around the farm and up to where Billie was raised in a sod house. Although only a small corner of the house is still standing, it is still a special place to Billie. One day, a little dog shows up at the farm and becomes Billie's special companion, who he names Lucy. Now Billie, Jake and Lucy take the walks around the farm until the day Billie is hospitalized with bronchitis. Jake realizes he must fulfill Billie's request to build a sod house, and with the help of his siblings, does just that. When Billie comes home from the hospital, the family takes him to the sod house where he spends his days there. But at eighty-eight, Billie cannot live forever. One day Lucy comes to the house to find the family and when they follow her to the sod house, Billie has passed away. They never see Lucy again but realize from a news article she may be the dog who has befriended a sick lady in a neighboring town, and is now her companion. And Jake recognizes the importance of the dog and the sod house to his grandfather. This book is recommended for grades 2-4 and for any library collection. This is a very poignant description of the death of a loved one. Jake thinks his grandfather will live forever, but we know that is impossible. This is a very gentle description of the special bond between Jake and Billie and how Billie goes to extra lengths to grant his grandfather's wish for the sod house to be rebuilt. Might be a good book for young people to read where death of a loved one is imminent or they are dealing with a death in the family.

Deb Daehnke

***Beautiful Ballerina***

By Marilyn Nelson

This story is in the page-by-page form of a poem. Each page has beautiful photos of ballerinas of all ages. This would not be a favorite book of mine. The story is hard to follow and leaves you wondering at the end, "What did I just read?"

However, it would be a good book for someone that is very interested in ballet. This book is recommended for grades Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> and appropriate for any library.

Lara Morrow

***A Wish For You***

By Matt Novak

This story tells about life before and after the birth of kids. A cute story that describes a family's life events before a child is born. Then it tells how life changes a bit when a baby is born. A very cute story to read a toddler when they are little. A good "first" book for a new family to own. Recommended for Preschool and Kindergarten grades and appropriate for any library.

Lara Morrow